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THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Old Colony Baptist Association,

HELD WITH THE

7551.403

Baptist Church in North Middleboro',

Bd.

OCTOBER 9th & 10th, 1872.

[ ]

☞ Minutes of Corresponding Associations, and other documents relating to the Old Colony Baptist Association, may be directed to Rev. ANDREW READ, W. Scituate, Mass.

BOSTON:
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1872.

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CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I. This body shall be styled the OLD COLONY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

ART. II. It shall be composed of Ministers and Delegates, appointed by the Churches which they represent. Every Church connected with the Association may send six delegates, including the pastor.

ART. III. The objects of the Association shall be the collection of statistical and other information from the Churches; the cultivation of mutual acquaintance and fraternal union, and the free interchange of views on subjects pertaining to personal religion, the spiritual prosperity of the Churches, and the advancement of the general interests of the kingdom of Christ.

ART. IV. The Association shall meet annually on the 2d Wednesday in October, at 10 o'clock, A. M., at such place as may be appointed; notice of which shall be given in the Minutes. The first business of the Association shall be to organize by the choice of a Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer, who shall be chosen by ballot, and continue in office until the election of their successors.

The Moderator shall preside in all the meetings, preserve order, and also nominate the Committees, unless otherwise ordered.

The Clerk shall keep a true record of all the doings, superintend the printing and distribution of the Minutes, and preserve files of all the papers belonging to the Association.

The Treasurer shall receive all moneys and other property contributed for the purposes of the Association, and shall dispose of them according to the will of the donors or the votes of the Association.

ART. V. Immediately after the organization of the Association, a Committee of Arrangements for the Session shall be appointed, after which the Annual Sermon shall be preached and a collection taken for the Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society.

ART. VI. Each Church shall send annually a letter containing an account of its history during the year preceding, specifying the number added by baptism, by letter and by restoration; the number removed by dismission, exclusion and by death, with the whole number then in fellowship; and also money for the publication of the Minutes.

ART. VII. If any Church shall for three successive years neglect to send such letter, it shall be regarded as having withdrawn from us, and shall be dropped from the Minutes, unless two or more members shall request its continuance, and shall engage to inquire into its standing, and report at the next meeting of the Association.

ART. VIII. The Association may receive any Church which applies for admission by sending a letter and delegates, and gives satisfactory evidence of its faith and order

ART. IX. Although as an Association we disclaim all power over the Churches, as far as respects an interference with their independence and discipline, yet we deem it our privilege to judge for ourselves of the propriety of continuing any Church in connection, which to us shall appear to be *heterodox in principle or irregular in practice*. In order, however, that we may not withdraw our fellowship without sufficient reason, provided a complaint is made by any two members of this body against a Church belonging to the Association, they shall appoint a Committee, who shall request a conference with said Church, to obtain satisfaction on the points of complaint, and their result shall be reported to the next meeting of the Association, that they may then decide as duty shall appear.

ART. X. At each annual meeting the Association shall appoint a preacher for the next, and, also, a person to write the next Circular Letter, or a preacher of a Doctrinal Sermon, with an alternate for each.

ART. XI. This Constitution may be altered or amended at any annual meeting of the Association, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present; provided always that notice of such alteration or amendment shall have been given at a previous annual meeting, and published in the Minutes.

MINUTES.

North Middleboro', Oct. 9, 1872.

1. The Old Colony Baptist Association met with the Baptist Church in North Middleboro', at 10 o'clock, A. M

2. Organized by choice of Rev. R. B. Moody, Moderator; Rev. Andrew Read, Clerk; Rev. J. Barber, Assistant Clerk; and Dea. John Brooks, Treasurer.

3. Moderator read the Rules of Order, and Rev. B. W. Barrows, of the Boston South Association, led in prayer.

4. Appointed Rev. Joseph Hutchinson, Rev. G. G. Fairbanks and Dea. P. E. Hill, a Committee of Arrangements for the present session.

5. Visiting brethren were invited to sit with the Association, and participate in its deliberations.

The following brethren accepted the invitation:—Rev. Lewis Holmes, Worcester Asso.; Revs. S. G. Abbott and B. W. Barrows, Boston South Asso.; Revs. J. Kelley and John Blain, Taunton Asso.; Rev. B. A. Edwards, Wachusett Asso.; Dr. Child, of the Bible and Publication Society; Dr. Murdock, of the Missionary Union; Dr. Mason, of the Home Mission Society; Rev. H. Fittz, of the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

6. Rev. Andrew Read preached the Annual Sermon from Ex. 8:9. "*This is the finger of God;*" and John 17:17. "*Thy word is truth.*" Subject—"*The Truth which God makes Effectual among the Nations in the overthrow of Error.*" Brethren Lewis Holmes and H. C. Coombs assisted in the devotional exercises. Sung, "Come we who love the Lord."

7. Took up a collection for Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society, amounting to $14.00.

8. The following Committees were appointed:—

Next Anniversary—Revs. J. Barber and H. C. Coombs.

Circular Letter—Revs. C. A. Snow and I. J. Burgess.

Finance—Deas. P. E. Hill, D. B. Gurney and John Brooks.

Obituaries—Revs. G. G. Fairbanks and Andrew Read.

State of Churches—Revs. J. B. Read and Bro. Abel Sylvester.

9. Heard the letter from the First Church in Middleboro'. This cordially welcomed the Association to the sanctuary and hospitalities of its homes.

10. Listened to the reading of the letters from the churches till the hour of adjournment. Sung, "Saviour visit thy plantation." Rev. H. Fittz led in prayer.

Afternoon Session.

11. Met at 2.15. Sung, "Jesus lover of my soul." Rev. S. G. Abbott, of Boston South Association, led in prayer.

12. Rev. G. G. Fairbanks spoke in behalf of Peirce Academy, offering the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted :—

Resolved, That the educational interests of this Association demand one well-supported Academy in our midst, and hence we heartily pledge our most sincere prayers and earnest efforts to make our beloved Peirce Academy a first class Institution of learning.

13. Rev. H. Fittz made an earnest plea for the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

14. Rev. David Weston preached the Memorial Sermon from Matt. 28 : 19, and Mark 16 : 15, 16. Subject—"*Baptist History in the Old Colony Association.*"

15. Rev. C. A. Snow presented the interests of the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts. Took up a collection of $18.16.

16. Dea. P. E. Hill offered the following resolution :—

Resolved, That a Committee of three be raised to consider the expediency of erecting a suitable monument over the venerable remains of Rev. Isaac Backus, and report to-morrow morning.

Appointed Dea. Hill, Dea. D. B. Gurney and Rev. C. A. Snow.

17. On motion of Rev. G. G. Fairbanks, a vote of thanks was passed to Rev. David Weston, for his learned and labored production presented to the Association. The publication of the sermon was referred to the Finance Committee.

18. Committee on Circular Letter reported, "We have examined the Letter, and advise that it be read at such time as the Committee of Arrangements recommend."

19. Appointed H. C. Coombs, G. G. Fairbanks and C. A. Snow, to advise with the Baptist Church in Halifax.

20. *Voted*, That the same Committee canvass the field in North Bridgewater, and see what can be done to revive the Baptist interest in that place.

21. Rev. John Blain offered prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God, for His favor to the churches of the Association during the half century of its existence. Adjourned to meet at 7 o'clock.

EVENING SESSION.

22. Met at 7 o'clock. Sung, "I love thy kingdom Lord," and spent a half hour in prayer and conference.

23. After singing, "And did the Holy and the Just," reading of Scripture by Rev. B. A. Edwards, and prayer by Rev. John Blain, Rev. S. P. Lewey, a converted Israelite, preached from Heb. 10 : 14. Subject—"*Christ a Sacrifice for Sin.*" Sung, "Not all the blood of beasts."

24. Rev. J. N. Murdock presented the claims of the Missionary Union.

25. Adjourned after singing "Shall we gather at the river."

THURSDAY MORNING.

26. Met at 8 o'clock. Prayer meeting for one hour, led by Rev. J. Blain.

27. At 9 o'clock resumed the business of the Association. Rev. I. J. Burgess led in prayer.

28. Rev. H. C. Coombs moved that a Committee of three be appointed to examine certain propositions made by the Second Lakeville Church, to the deacons of the Central Baptist Church in Middleboro', and the deacons of the Baptist Church in Raynham, to transfer certain funds. Appointed H. C. Coombs, I. J. Burgess and Dea. S. Benson that Committee.

29. At the request of Bro. Coombs, the name of Rev. H. Fittz was substituted for his own, in consideration of Bro. Fittz being a member of the Central Church, Middleboro'.

30. The following resolution, offered by Rev. C. A. Snow, was unanimously adopted:—*Resolved*, That the work of the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts, in respect to aiding aged indigent Baptist ministers, has a strong claim upon our benevolence, and that each church in the Association be requested to take up a collection for this object as soon as practicable.

31. On motion of Rev. J. B. Read, it was *Voted*, That each church be requested to raise at least 25 cents a member for the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

32. Committee on Finance reported: "We have examined the cash of the Treasurer, and the amount on hand exactly balances the amount received. P. E. Hill, for Committee. Adopted, and continued the same Committee to audit the accounts at the next meeting of the Association.

33. Committee on the Monument to Rev. Isaac Backus reported, offering the following resolution:—

Whereas all that is mortal of the loved, the revered, the sainted Isaac Backus reposes within the limits of the Old Colony Association, it is fitting that where his memory is the most fragrant, the love of his defence of the Baptist Faith the strongest, where admiration of his unwearied labors, and ceaseless energies to establish this faith is the deepest, to give expression to their respect by erecting a suitable monument to point to his resting place.

Therefore, *Resolved*, That a Committee of three be appointed to raise the means, amounting at least to $1,000, and cause a marble or granite shaft, with suitable inscriptions, to be erected to his memory.

34. Report adopted, and Dea. P. E. Hill, Dr. Benjamin Hubbard and Bro. H. A. Bates, of South Abington, were appointed that Committee.

35. Committee on Obituaries reported. Adopted, and ordered to be printed in the Minutes.

The Committee on Obituaries beg leave to report:—

That our Heavenly Father having made ready his celestial mansions, has been calling the past year on some of his beloved children to come home and occupy them with their Elder Brother. Their day for work has passed, and having completed their earthly mission, they have gone on before us to the enjoyment of a happy, sinless rest.

Sister Polly Hutchinson, the estimable wife of the pastor of the First Middleboro' Church, has finished a noble work of forty years' duration in her Master's cause, and after four months of intense suffering, endured patiently throughout, seeing Him who is invisible, she fell asleep in Jesus, Dec. 20, 1871. "She was a faithful, loving wife, a wise and tender mother, a safe, careful counsellor, and an humble, quiet Christian."

The church in Carver had "one dear brother, a few months after his baptism, leave them to join the church triumphant, and one sister, who, after a long illness, borne with patience and resignation, took leave of family and friends, entreating them to prepare to meet her in heaven, passed on to the better land."

Kingston Church "mourns the loss of sister Harriet Bradford, a worthy member of thirty years' standing.

Hanover has lost one of their youngest and three of their oldest members. "Sisters Nancy Pool, Jane Brooks, Eleretta Tribou and Desire Whiting, were all buried in the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave."

Much ripened grain has been gathered from the Plymouth Church. Six sissisters, all over 80 years of age, and one over 90, waiting for the summons, and listening for the Master's call to come up higher, have crossed the flood and are now waiting in glory for the loved ones on earth to finish their appointed course.

In October, Jesus took from the Hanson Church, Georgie W. Horton, the daughter of Rev. J. M. Horton, but they "trust that their loss is her gain."

Scituate Church has been bereft of Dexter Vinal, aged 75, Rev. Franklin Damon, 53, and Mary A. Chandler, 68. When a young man, Bro. Damon went to

Scituate to teach school, while preparing for the ministry, and then supplied their pulpit. The Spirit was poured out on his labors, and he was ordained as an Evangelist, to gather the lambs and sheep into the Lord's fold. He was afterward pastor at Brewster and Bow, N. H., where he remained for seventeen years, when he returned to his wife's early home to die. "For a long time he seemed to be living on the border land, expecting that each attack of severe illness might be his last, yet patiently suffering and waiting still, until at last the summons came for him to leave the weary body and enter into the joy of the Lord."

West Bridgewater has lost Bro. Davis Alger, for more than thirty years a quiet, peaceful member of the church, much esteemed as an unobtrusive man, and for years as a trustee of the church.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors."

For the Committee, G. G. FAIRBANKS.

36. The Committee of Arrangements for next Anniversary reported, recommending the Association to accept the cordial invitation of the South Abington Church to hold its next Anniversary with them; that Rev. I. J. Burgess preach the Annual Sermon; and that Rev. T. W. Crawley be his alternate; that Rev. C. A. Snow preach the Doctrinal Sermon; and that Rev. H. C. Coombs be his alternate; that the subject of the Doctrinal Sermon be "*The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,—Who are the Proper Subjects, and what is its Relation to Christ's Church?*" Adopted.

37. Committee on State of the Churches reported as follows:—

In matters pertaining to outward prosperity our churches give us encouraging reports. It is pleasant to hear of the promptness with which home expenses are met, of prosperity in the Sabbath schools, and of increasing numbers who attend upon the ministry of the word. And for benevolent objects abroad,—if it cannot be said that we have done what we could, it can be said that we have shown a good degree of generosity.

But how are we on the main question? What are we doing in direct labor for Christ? Little, too little, we fear, compared with what we might. It is not exaggeration to say that we are asleep while souls are perishing every where around us. Few have been gathered in. The past has been one of the least fruitful years in the history of the Association.

Brethren, shall this state of things continue? Is it not worth while to make special efforts for Christ? In view of the great need of *concerted* labor within the bounds of this Association, we recommend as follows:—

1st. That the several churches enter, as soon as circumstances permit, upon a systematic effort for the salvation of souls and the strengthening of the things that remain, calling upon sister churches for so much aid as may be desired.

2d. That the several pastors hold themselves in readiness to assist in such efforts, and that the churches encourage their pastors to do so.

3d. That the churches, also, whenever desired, contribute their *best working talent*, and assist each other by every available means.

Unanimously adopted.

38. On motion of Rev. T. L. Rogers, it was *Voted*, To appoint a Committee of three to advise with pastors and churches with reference to devotional meetings, and prepare a schedule of appointments, both of places and preachers.

39. Appointed Revs. J. B. Read, J. Hutchinson and A. Read that Committee.

40. Listened to the reading of the Circular Letter, which, in the absence of its author, was read by Bro. Fairbanks.

41. *Voted*, To print it in the Minutes.

42. Committee on Second Baptist Church, Lakeville, reported, recommending,

That the Association approve of the propositions of the Second Baptist Church, Lakeville, to transfer the funds left by Asa King and Andrew Cole, to the deacons of the Central Baptist Church, Middleborough, and the deacons of the Baptist Church in Raynham; and we recommend that a copy of these propositions, together with the quit claim of Enoch King, the only heir at law of Asa King, be

recorded in the office of the Register of Probate, (of Bristol County,) and also that a copy be kept by the Clerk of this Association.

Adopted.

43. *Voted*, To print the Minutes of the Sabbath School Convention with the Minutes of the Association.

44. *Voted*, To omit page 12 of the last Minutes.

45. *Voted*, To omit, for the present year, the Digest of Letters.

46. Treasurer presented his Report.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Col. after sermon, for Bap. Char. Soc...	$14.00
First Middleboro'—Female Miss. Soc...	62.86
First Marshfield—Home Missions,.....	16.00
Ministerial Education,.....	10.00
State Convention,.....	3.00
Collection for Conference of Bap. Min...	18.16
Kingston—Missionary Union,.....	9.25
Hanover—State Convention,.....	15.00
Dea. P. E. Hill—State Convention,....	7.00
	$155.27

For Chicago Sufferers.

Oct. 20, 1871.	
Central Middleeoro',.....	$100.00
South Abington,.....	54.00
Hanover,.....	31.00
First Middleboro',.....	5.00
Third Middleboro',.....	9.50
Carver,.....	5.00
	$204.50
	$359.77

For Minutes—

First Middleboro',.....	$3.00
First Marshfield,.....	2.00
Hanover,.....	7.00
Plymouth,.....	5 00
North Scituate,.....	7.00
North Marshfield,.....	1.50
Central Middleboro',.....	8.00
West Bridgewater,.....	3.65
Third Middleboro',.....	6.00
Kingston,.....	3.00
Carver,.....	1.50
Halifax,.....	50
South Hanson,.....	5.00
South Abington,.....	10.00
Collection for Minutes,.....	10.04
	$73.19

JOHN BROOKS, *Treasurer.*

Adopted.

47. Appointed H. A. Bates, Wm. B. White and S. Benson, delegates to the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

48. Finance Committee recommended that Bro. Elijah Alden be made life member of the Massachusetts Baptist Convention, with the funds contributed for the Convention. Adopted.

49. Appointed J. W. P. Jenks and S. Benson, Trustees of the Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society.

50. Appointed Rev. I. J. Burgess to report the Association to the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

51. On recommendation of the Finance Committee, to which the printing of the Memorial Sermon was referred, it was voted to print it in the Minutes, and to take up a collection in addition to what the churches had sent, for the printing of the Minutes.

52. Dr. A. P. Mason spoke in behalf of the interests of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Prayer by Rev. T. L. Rogers. Adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

53. Met at 2 o'clock. Sung, "In the Christian's home in glory." Rev. B. A. Edwards offered prayer.

54. Committee to arrange for Devotional Meetings reported, "That a series of meetings be held with the South Hanson Church, commencing Tuesday, Nov. 12th, at 10 o'clock, A. M.; that Bro. Rogers preach the first sermon, and Bro. Barber the second; that another series of meetings be held with the church in North Scituate, commeneing Tuesday, Dec. 10th; that Bro. Fairbanks preach the first sermon, and Bro. J. B. Read the second; that a third series of meetings be held with the church in North Middleboro', at such time in the month of January as may hereafter be

announced; that Bro. Snow preach the first sermon, and Bro. Andrew Read the second." Report adopted.

55. Dr. Child spoke of the work of the Bible and Publication Society, and of the place it should have in the sympathy and aid of the churches.

56. Minutes of the Association were read and approved.

57. Bro. Blain preached a feeling discourse from Ps. 9:1. Subject—"*A Home with God.*" Sung, "I'm going home."

58. Passed a vote of thanks to the church and people in North Middleboro', for the bountiful hospitalities extended to the Association.

59. After remarks by the Moderator the Association adjourned to meet with the Baptist Church in South Abington the second Wednesday in October, 1873. Sung, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

60. Feeling good-byes, which tearful eyes and cordial grasping of hands expressed, closed this half century meeting of the Association. Many lingered here on historic ground, where Isaac Backus lived, labored and died, and where his memory is held sacred. Remembrances both sad and joyous moved the feelings as the past was lived over again; and faith in God, and hope for the future strengthened the desire and the determination to be the worthy successors of such noble men and women as God has, in the past, given to the Old Colony Baptist Association. To those who will celebrate the Centennial of the Association, as it now does ours, so will Whittier's verse express their feelings.

"Not unto us who do but seek
The word that burns within to speak,
Not unto us this day belong
The triumph and exultant song.

"The praise, O Lord! is Thine alone,
In Thy own way Thy work is done:
Our poor gift at Thy feet we cast,
To whom be glory first and last."

R. B. MOODY, *Moderator.*

ANDREW READ, *Clerk.*

J. BARBER, *Assistant Clerk.*

RULES OF ORDER.

1. Every session shall be opened and closed with prayer by the Moderator, or by whomsoever he may request.

2. Brethren present, invited to a seat with us, may speak on all subjects regularly introduced, but vote on none.

3. The following Committees shall be appointed by the Moderator:—1. A Committee of Arrangements, for the Present Session. 2. A Committee of Arrangements for next Anniversary. 3. A Committee on Circular Letter. 4. A committee on the State of the Churches. 5. A Committee on Finance. 6. A Committee on Obituaries.

4. No subject shall be discussed, without a motion first made and seconded.

5. Motions made and lost shall not be recorded, except so ordered; nor shall they be renewed during the sitting of that Association, unless moved by a member voting in the negative. If required, all motions shall be in writing.

6. If any proposition or motion under debate, contain two or more points, it shall be divided at the request of any member, and the vote taken separately.

7. The Minutes shall be leisurely read and corrected before the rising of the Association.

STATISTICS OF CHURCHES.

N. B. Names of ordained Ministers are in SMALL CAPITALS; Licentiates in *italics;* Churches without Pastors designated by a ——; Post office addresses in [—].

Churches, when organized, and Clerks.	Pastors, when settled, and Post Office. Ministers and Delegates.	Baptism.	Letter.	Experience.	Restored.	Dismissed.	Excluded.	Erased.	Died.	Present No.	Prep. for Min.	All Monies raised.
1st Middleboro', 1756. C. B. Hutchinson, *Clerk.*	J. HUTCHINSON, 1865....[Titicut.] H. H. Alden, E. Alden, E. Drake, Wm. B. White, Jas. Backus, Thos. J. Alden.					1	3		1	87		$800.00
3d Middleboro', 1761.. J. Q. Morton, *Clerk.*	L. J. BURGESS, 1871.....[Rock.] S. Benson, Tyler Pierce. W. Barrows,		1			2		1	4	98		1125.00
1st Marshfield, 1788.. D. B. Ford, *Clerk.*	——————,..... A. Magoun, Wm. Rogers, N. Church, Chas. Bailey, J. H. Baker, G. W. Boylston.									56		556.00
Carver, 1791..... H. A. Lucas, *Clerk.*	H. C. COOMBS, '72..[Middleboro'.]	3		1					2	30		497.70
Kingston, 1805..... E. C. Drew, *Clerk.*	T. W. CRAWLEY, 1872..[Kingston.] H. Cobb, A. Freeman, L. Bartlett, B. Dunham. C. Washburn,		1						1	71		1188.00
Hanover, 1806..... C. J. Ford, *Clerk.*	A. READ, 1863.....[W. Scituate.] J. Brooks, C. J. Ford. J. S. Brooks, Loring Curtis. J. S. Smith,					1			4	84		1093.20
Plymouth, 1809..... B. Hubbard, *Clerk.*	R. B. MOODY, 1868...[Plymouth.] Wm. Hall, Geo. Fuller, I. Blackmer, L. Holmes.	4		1				5	6	138		2552.00
South Hanson, 1812.. L. Z. Thomas, *Clerk.*	J. B. REED, 1872....[S. Hanson.] C. W. Bourne, B. Sampson, C. L. Read, R. W. Thomas. L. Z. Thomas,		3	1		4			1	98		938.02
South Abington, 1822. J. L. Corthell. *Clerk.*	C. A. SNOW, 1870,..[S. Abington.] N. FULLERTON, D. B. Gurney, J. L. Corthell, R. Cook, B. Alden, John Swain, John Wade, G. Sharpe.					4				243		2664.74
North Scituate, 1825.. S. T. Bailey, *Clerk.*	T. L. ROGERS, 1871..[N. Scituate.] *A. Sylvester,* J. W. Balley, J. Brown, H. Bates. J. N. Studley,	4	5	1		10	1	2	3	154		2016.13
Central Middleboro',.. 1828. E. S. Hathaway, *Cl'k.*	G.G. FAIRBANKS, '69.[Middleboro'] SILAS HALL, P. L. CUSHING, *J. W. P. Jenks, G. B. Fittz,* I. Thomas, S. P. Keith, F. R. Eaton, E. Jones. S. B. Gibbs,		1		1	3		3		211		3640.00
North Marshfield, 1833. Wm. Eames, *Clerk.*	——————,..... B. W. GARDNER, Wm. Eames,								1	41		539.89
W. Bridgewater, 1833. A. Copeland, *Clerk.*	J. BARBER, 1871.....[Cochesett.] P. E. Hill, Albert Copeland. Barnabas Dunbar,	6	2	1					1	53		1100.00

SUMMARY.

Churches,	13	Dismissed,	25
Pastors,	11	Excluded,	4
Licentiates,	3	Erased,	11
Added by Baptism,	17	Died,	24
" " Letter,	13	Present number,	1314
" " Experience,	5		
Restored,	1		

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BY J. W. P. JENKS.

HUMAN nature displays itself both by internal and by external manifestations. Every one is conscious of a double life,—the internal, creating, and the external created; but the latter, though the offspring of the former, often exerts so powerful a reflex influence upon the former, as sometimes to make it doubtful which may be the antecedent and which the consequent. In like manner the Church, divinely appointed for the benefit of the human race, is found to embody essentially an external as well as an internal life. The latter is the direct and unique gift of the Great Head, the former, the external is equally a bestowment from the divine Source of all blessings, but subject to the modifications that may arise from human interference, permitted as the result of man's free agency.

We are thus led to suggest as the theme of our reflections, *The External Prosperity of the Church*, and shall endeavor to enumerate some of the particulars upon which it depends.

The internal Christian life having been begotten from on high in the hearts of a number of individuals living contiguously, they become a company of Believers. Obeying their social instincts, first of all they feel the necessity of a *House of Worship*, in which to maintain the stated preaching of the Gospel, a Prayer-room, (Baptists should discard the term Vestry,) in which to maintain the social gatherings of the church, and a Parsonage.

The "Tabernacle" and subsequent "Temple," suggest the first of these buildings—the "upper chamber" suggests the second, which may be an appendage to the first or entirely separate, but should ever *be*,—the fifteen three-story houses for the Priests near to the Temple suggest the Parsonage. All these buildings should be no less expensive or convenient and attractive in their construction than the majority of the worshippers inhabit; the Tabernacle of Moses, built exactly according to the "pattern showed him in the Mount," and the Temple of Solomon, built in the main according to the Divine plan, were proportionately far more expensive, ornamental and elaborate than the average abodes of the worshippers. It would seem superfluous to add that all these buildings should be kept in the best of repair. Prov. 24: 30—34. The question of free seats in the house of worship in every locality is yet debatable, but the verdict of public opinion is being rapidly pronounced in favor of it, that the hearing of the gospel may be in the fullest sense to the unconverted world, "without money and without price," at least a compulsory price. If it be objected that the original builders of a house of worship, in giving a quit-claim to posterity of all pecuniary interest therein do more than their share, it is answered that, debarring providential circumstances by which the whole may have to be rebuilt at any time by the original builders or by posterity, *to posterity* will be left the legacy of constant alterations to keep pace with improvements in the convenience and architecture of their own dwellings and similar structures, amounting in each generation to an entire rebuilding of all.

The House of Worship, Prayer-room and Parsonage, being constructed and dedicated *after being paid for*, the next effort of the church will be to secure a Minister. A reasonable amount of candidating may be indispensable, but it must be apparent to all that there is a growing tendency on the part of congregations to be injuriously fastidious in their choice of a Pastor, especially in respect to the one particular of age. Is it not the first question asked in respect to a candidate? and if the reply hint of the neighborhood of fifty, does not that, in their estimation, extreme age, negative the candidateship? But do not so many of the very objectors as happen to be over that age, and less than fourscore, invariably consider themselves as better qualified to take care of their own private affairs or those of the church and society than they were at any earlier period of their lives? and would they not prefer to employ a physician or lawyer, other things being equal, advanced to three-score, than one a score and a half or even two-score years old? The hearing of numerous candidates is liable to prevent a choice, by forming parties in the church and society equal in number to the candidates that have been listened to, thus producing divisions that can only be healed by giving up all candidating, and, for a longer or shorter time,—the shorter always too long,—being contented with supplies instead of candidates, till the peculiar attractions of the several unwitting agents of the division have been in a measure forgotten.

Nor should the fastidiousness of the ministry be entirely omitted in this discussion. It is undeniable that with some,—can we say many,—the "loaves and fishes" alone settle the question of their acceptance or rejection of a "call."

The minister settled, the next step is to conform to all the terms of settlement by prompt payment of the salary and by meeting the current expenses of the church, as each honest individual member expects to cancel his obligations in the business transactions of life. Paying the salary at the time originally agreed upon, we repeat, and not taking into calculation the hope of eking it out by a donation-party or some such adventitious contrivance. Not that we object to donation-parties as such, but regard them as very uncertain means of making up a Pastor's salary; as one when a pastor not five hundred miles from the limits of the Old Colony Baptist Association will testify, who, having received a hint that on a certain evening his parishioners would call en masse at his residence and make a donation, in the invalid state of his wife, felt under the necessity of purchasing the dessert part of the treat at a neighboring city, anticipating that the substantials would be brought in, "enough" and "to spare," and in which expectation he was disappointed as to the "enough," inasmuch as it was all eat up by the party, including his own purchases; and an inspection of the premises the next morning revealed the "to spare" to consist of two pairs of mittens, a cologne bottle, and a copy of "Barnes's Notes on the Book of Job"—the latter opportunely left, it would seem, to aid him in cultivating the graces of meekness and patience.

On the other hand, the external prosperity of the church requires that a minister should be most scrupulously exact in meeting all his pecuniary and secular obligations. The idea entertained by some ministers, it is to be hoped not many, and not only entertained but acted upon, that a church owes them a support, they alone being judges of what that support should be, and hence negligently allowing their current expenses to overrun their salary, in the expectation that it will be made up to them by *certain* brethren, when they learn of their exigency, is not

an idea based upon the morality they preach to others, and hence cannot but be a powerful obstacle in the way of their success as spiritual instructors and guides.

Eliphaz the Temanite, while urging upon Job the importance of regarding God in his affliction, goes on to enumerate the interpositions on his behalf, he may expect of God, and specifies particularly that God will "hide him from the *Scourge of the Tongue.*" The Pastor being settled and the secular concerns of the church prosperous, the prosperity is most liable to be interfered with by what the Apostle James calls the "unruly member." A few quotations from Scripture will show how much the right or wrong use of the tongue has to do with the external prosperity of the church.

"There is that speaketh like the piercings of the sword; but the tongue of the wise is health." "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." "Whoso keepeth his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles." "For he that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." From these quotations, which might be multiplied almost indefinitely, we may infer how much the usefulness of a church depends upon a judicious "bridling of the tongue."

All social compacts imply consent to certain laws consonant to the compact, and hence affix penalties to the violation of the laws. The covenant binding together the individual members of the church, is no exception to this principle inherent in our nature, whether converted or unconverted. Hence our Saviour gave explicit directions for managing cases of discipline,—directions so plain that only a mind "bent on evil" can misunderstand them. It need not be argued for a moment that the Saviour would not have been so explicit in His instructions upon this point, if he had not foreseen the necessity, on the part of the church, of maintaining a discipline that should in no way interfere with its external prosperity.

As in the experience of individuals compacted for any secular purpose, so in the experience of the Church, from the time when during its formation even, the disciples James and John conspired with their mother to secure the chief place among their fellow-disciples, the church has suffered from the infliction of what is not inaptly termed "one man power." The heresies traceable in the history of the church to this un-Christlike disposition of some one or more members, and the too easy submission of the rest to their dictation, are too patent to dwell upon. When the church fears more the face of man than the commands of the Saviour, both its external and internal prosperity are not only jeopardized, but absolutely annulled. Hence the cultivation of this disposition on the part of any member should be immediately checked, on the principle taught by our Saviour, "All ye are brethren." This does not exclude the appointment of officers of the church for the discharge of specific duties, and such deference to their opinion and advice as may legitimately result from a more careful examination on their part of subjects within the sphere of their appointment and to which they should limit themselves, unless they would become obnoxious to the charge of making themselves "lords over God's heritage."

The day remembered by some of us, when Sabbath Schools were decried by even good men, has long passed by, and a church without a Sabbath school is happily an anomaly. But it may be so little cared for by the church as to be only a starveling in itself and utterly impotent for promoting the church's welfare. This view presupposes the relation of the Sabbath school to the church to be that

of parent and child, and if such be the relation as is now generally acknowledged, the obligation of the parent to care for the child is but instinctive. Yet while the child may not perish for the want of proper aliment, it may be so neglected as to be unfit for such effort as it ought to be prepared for, and hence the parent loses the aid that ought to be expected from the child. In like manner the Sabbath school may be so ungenerously cared for by the church, as to be crippled in all its agency for good, instead of being made efficient by the furnishing of a suitable library and other reading matter, the co-operation of parents and pastors, and above all, a daily remembrance of it in prayer.

The last subject to which we shall allude as bearing upon the external prosperity of the Church, is "*Systematic Benevolence.*" The term benevolence originally meant wishing well; and we fear many have never learned that it now includes doing well, as well as wishing well, thus absorbing into itself the meaning of beneficent. Employing it etymologically with this two-fold signification, we fear again that many never think it implies wishing and doing well to others, but only to themselves. Such was not the Apostle's meaning when he wrote to the Corinthians "Concerning the collection for the saints," as the context fully shows. Furthermore the fact that the Apostle promised to send some with their "liberality" to Jerusalem, a journey of near a thousand miles, shows how much he expected of them, as a meagre "collection" would be absorbed by the expenses of the journey. Hence contributions for the construction of Houses for Worship and the support of the preaching of the Gospel in one's own neighborhood is not, strictly, benevolence, but the honest payment of debts as necessarily contracted for the food and maintenance of the spirit as those contracted for the sustenance of the body. Scripture benevolence extends outside of self, whether individual or church, and is indispensable to the external prosperity of any body of believers. But to secure its specific blessings, each individual must "lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." For example, on review of his income for a year, a definite portion of it should be put to the credit of benevolence for the year to come—the old Jewish law required a tenth part. No definite proportion is mentioned in the New Testament, but the whole *tenor* of the gospel implies that the Saviour expected no less of His disciples than was required under the Mosaic dispensation. But of the proportional part of one's income to be given to the treasury of the Lord as pure benevolence, let every one be "persuaded in his own mind," only let it be decided upon and faithfully adhered to, whether it be a tenth or a fifth, or even a half of one's entire income, and then feel equally conscientious in using the remainder for ordinary expenses or investing for old age.

Dear Brethren—We have thus suggested eight particulars wherein the external prosperity of the Church is concerned. First, Houses for Worship, Prayer-room and Parsonage. Second, Securing a Minister. Third, Supporting the Pastor and meeting the current expenses of the Church. Fourth, the Scourge of the Tongue. Fifth, Maintaining New Testament Discipline. Sixth, Discarding the "One man power." Seventh, An Efficient Sabbath School. Eighth, Systematic Benevoleuce. More might be enumerated, and all these enlarged upon, as we have not attempted an exhaustive discussion of any of the topics, but trust what we have thus briefly presented accords with the Scriptures of divine truth as they do with our sincere convictions of what should be the practice of the Church for promoting its external prosperity and usefulness.

MEMORIAL DISCOURSE.

BY REV. D. WESTON.

"*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

"*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" Mark 16 : 15, 16.

The above passage from Matthew was spoken by the risen Saviour on a mountain in Galilee, where, before his crucifixion, he had appointed a meeting with his disciples. This was doubtless the occasion when, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "he was seen above five hundred brethren at once." Mark, in the closing verses of his gospel, has evidently grouped together words spoken by the risen Saviour at several different times; and the above passage from Mark was probably uttered at the same time as that from Matthew, the two being closely connected as parts of the same address. Or if, as some scholars suppose, the two passages were spoken at different times, then the one from Mark was Christ's private charge to his disciples on some occasion when he appeared to them alone, and the one from Matthew was the same charge given publicly, to them and the many who had assembled with them.

The passage from Matthew, or sometimes, and more properly, the two passages together, have been called The Great Commission. Except the few words spoken at his ascension, and the few words spoken when he appeared to Saul, they are the last recorded words of Christ. They are his solemn and official charge, as the Founder and Head of the Church, given with authority to his disciples, by whom, in accordance with it, the church was to be built up.

It has been often held, especially by our denominational fathers, that the three clauses of the Great Commission as given by Matthew, definitely lay down, in three successive steps, the duty of Christ's servant in spreading the gospel:—first, teach, or more literally, make disciples of, men, by showing them and urging upon them the way of salvation; second, baptize such disciples; third, instruct and discipline them in all the commandments and truths of the gospel. But there can be little doubt that this interpretation is unsound. It is, at least, questionable whether the usage and spirit of the

New Testament would call those *disciples* who have never assumed their discipleship by baptism. Moreover, a close examination of the passage in the original Greek shows that its three clauses are not three successive precepts, but that the first is a general precept,—"Teach," or disciple, "all nations," and the other two an explanation or expansion of this. The Saviour virtually said, Go make disciples of all nations *by* baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and *by* teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. To make men disciples, in the full sense of the text, includes the whole process.

Nothing, however, is lost, by abandoning the favorite interpretation of many of our Baptist fathers; for the words of the text evidently teach that those are to be baptized who are capable of being, and who have been, *taught*, and whose baptism will be a baptism of *discipleship*. The judgment of the best scholars of all denominations upon this passage, may be expressed in the words of a well known Paedobaptist commentator, who says that the connection of its different clauses "undeniably intimates that, in uttering these words, the Saviour had no immediate thought of infant baptism." Moreover, Matthew's version of the Great Commission must be interpreted in harmony with Mark's, and the latter plainly shows that, in the work of spreading the gospel and building up the church, which Christ thus committed to his disciples, only they are to be baptized who *believe*.

Our Saviour thus, at this most solemn interview with his disciples, which he had appointed before his crucifixion that he might formally commission and instruct them for the work of the salvation of the world,—in this his great and last charge to them, on the authority of which his disciples are to labor in his kingdom till the end of the world, bade them preach his gospel among all nations, to every creature who could receive it, baptize those who should receive it in faith and instruct them in all the truths, and enjoin upon them all the precepts of his gospel. The future of Christ's church,—the conversion of the world, was involved in this Great Commission. The kingdom of Christ is extended aright when this solemn charge is strictly observed,—cannot be extended aright when this is neglected. These words, spoken at such a time and under such circumstances, we cannot but regard as Christ's explicit and formal and unalterable command in accordance with which the whole work of building up his church is to be performed,—the "marching orders" of every soldier of Christ, which he is sacredly to observe till the warfare shall be accomplished, every fortress of sin be stormed and every rebel against God changed to an obedient and loving subject.

"Church history," says Isaac Taylor, "is a running commentary upon our Lord's most solemn promise to be with his servants always, even to the end of the world." Yes; and the commentary shows the fulfilment of the promise just in proportion as it shows that Christ's servants have kept the command which precedes it. In so far as they have been governed by Christ's Great Commission, Christ has been with them to guide and support and bless: in so far as they have deviated from that, slighting the one part

or the other, omitting faith or omitting baptism, or inverting their order, or teaching men to observe only a portion of Christ's commands or mingling the commands of men with his, Christ has withdrawn his presence and left them to their error and its sad results. Church history, that strange, perplexing, bewildering study, filled with inconsistencies and contradictions, where light and darkness, truth and falsehood, purity and corruption are strangely commingled and confused, where often we blush for shame and sometimes our faith is almost staggered, where often we are at a loss to know whether what we see is Jerusalem or Babylon, the "body of Christ" or the "man of sin," "the bride the Lamb's wife" or the adulteress and harlot,—church history, how different would have been its record if Christ's servants in spreading his gospel had always followed the simple plan of the Great Commission!

But we are especially concerned, to-day, with the religious history, not of the broad field of Christendom through all the ages of Christianity, but of a narrow portion of that field for a brief term of years;—not with the macrocosm of the world but with the microcosm of a district of a few square miles. On this fiftieth anniversary, let me attempt to trace the work of God's servants within the limits of the Old Colony Association in what I regard as the strict fulfilment of Christ's Great Commission;—in other words, let me attempt to sketch, at least in some leading points, the Baptist history of this part of the Old Colony.

The Old Colony Baptist Association is composed of thirteen churches, situated in Plymouth County, and comprising all the Regular or Calvinistic Baptist churches in the county but two. In previous years its limits have been much wider, including all the Baptist churches in Plymouth County, one in Bristol, several in Norfolk, all in Barnstable and one in Dukes County. These churches have been drawn away from the Old Colony Association by the formation of the Taunton, Boston South and Barnstable Associations. The earlier part of the sketch which I shall attempt, will have some reference to our history in the broader field which the Association formerly occupied; the latter part will be confined to its present limits.

The Puritans who settled Plymouth had associated with Dutch Baptists and with English Baptist refugees during their ten years' stay in Holland; and their sentiments seem to show the effects of such association. The leniency of the Plymouth colonists toward other sects, as compared with the severity of the colonists of Massachusetts Bay, may, perhaps, in part, be thus accounted for. The views of John Robinson, their pastor, were, in many points, precisely those which, before and since, have been universally known as Baptist views. The words of Cotton Mather are perhaps strictly true when he says, "Infant baptism hath been scrupled by multitudes in our days, who have been in other points most worthy Christians, and as holy, watchful, fruitful and heavenly people as perhaps any in the world. Some few of these people have been among the planters of New England from the beginning."

In 1631, eleven years after the settlement of Plymouth, a man joined the colony, who, a little later, and thenceforward for all time, was to reflect the highest honor upon the name of Baptist. He was Roger Williams. He had come from England in February of that year and had first settled in Salem as assistant pastor. Speedy complaint was made against him by the Governor and Council at Boston, on the grounds that he reproved the New England churches for not renouncing fellowship with the established churches in England, and that he denied the right of the civil magistrate to punish for breach of religious duty. Being compelled by these complaints to remove from Salem, he sought refuge under the milder government of Plymouth, and here also became assistant to the pastor of the Orthodox church. He remained two years, and then was recalled to Salem in the place of the pastor there who had died. That, while in Plymouth, he had approached very near to Baptist views is evident from the character of the complaints against him which occasioned his coming here, and from the words of Elder Brewster, who was anxious that he should leave Plymouth, fearing "that he would run the same course of rigid separation and Anabaptistry which Mr. John Smith at Amsterdam had done." Upon his return to Salem his Baptist sentiments speedily developed, and, in 1635, caused his banishment from Massachusetts and the settlement of Rhode Island.

Baptist views soon appeared again in the Old Colony in the towns of Scituate and Plymouth. In 1616, an Independent or Congregational church was formed in London, and, nine years later, John Lothrop became its pastor. In 1632, by the relentless persecution of Archbishop Laud, Lothrop and forty-two of his flock were imprisoned. After two years, all but the pastor were released. He petitioned to the king, and was set free on condition of his leaving the kingdom. He came to New England in 1634, with thirty-four of his congregation. In 1633, while a large part of the church were in prison, a division arose among the remainder with regard to the lawfulness of infant baptism, and, at last, the disaffected part formed themselves into a Baptist church with John Spilsbury as their pastor. In 1637, those who were left after this division and after the departure of Lothrop and his company, obtained as their pastor, Henry Jessey, a graduate of St. John's, Cambridge. Baptist sentiments continued to be matters of frequent discussion. Jessey was compelled by the circumstances to examine them. He brought to the examination an intimate acquaintance with the original languages of the Scriptures, and as the result, he became a Baptist and his church a Baptist church.

Mr. Lothrop and his brethren who came to New England, settled in Scituate. The same Baptist sentiments which appeared so prominently and repeatedly in the church which they left in England were brought by them to this country. The church which they formed in Scituate became troubled on the question of infant baptism, and, in 1639, was divided, Mr. Lothrop and others who were strenuous for retaining the rite, removing to Barnstable. In the mean time Baptist principles had become a bone of contention

in the Congregational church in Plymouth. They had settled as assistant pastor, Charles Chauncy, a distinguished scholar, who had been graduated and afterwards had been elected successively to the professorships of Hebrew and of Greek, at Trinity College, Cambridge. Says Governor Winthrop, "Our neighbors of Plymouth had procured one Mr. Chauncy, a great scholar and a godly man, intending to call him to the office of teacher; but before fit time came, he discovered his judgment about baptism, that the children ought to be dipped and not sprinkled. There arose much trouble about it. The magistrates and the elders there and most of the people withstood the receiving of that practise, not for itself so much as for fear of worse consequences, as the annihilating our baptism, &c. Whereupon the church there wrote to all the other churches both here and at Connecticut, for advice, and sent Mr. Chauncy's arguments. The churches took them into consideration and wrote their several answers, wherein they showed their dissent from him and clearly confuted all his arguments. Yet he could not give over his opinion, and the church of Plymouth, being much taken with his able parts, were very loth to part with him." Backus states that they conceded to Mr. Chauncy that "in case he would settle with them he should act according to his persuasion, which was that baptizing ought only to be by dipping or plunging the whole body under water, with such as desired it, either for themselves or infants, provided he could, without offense, suffer their other minister to practise in the other way with those who desired it; but he did not see light to comply." Thereupon the church in Scituate, which Mr. Lothrop had left principally because of trouble on the question of baptism, called Mr. Chauncy, in 1641, to the office of pastor. Thus, in Scituate there was a Congregational church, many of whom rejected infant baptism, with a pastor who accepted infant baptism but rejected sprinkling. Says Governor Winthrop again, "Mr. Chauncy of Scituate persevered in his opinion of dipping in baptism, and practised accordingly, first upon two of his own children, which being in very cold weather, one of them swooned away. Another, having a child about three years old, feared it would be frighted; (as others had been; and one caught hold of Mr. Chauncy and had near pulled him into the water;) she brought her child to Boston, with letters testimonial from Mr. Chauncy, and had it baptized here." Mr. Chauncy remained with the church till 1654, retaining his view of baptism, and then became president of Harvard College. It is said that he pledged himself to the overseers of the college "to be quiet in relation to the mode of baptism." Years before, in England, when he had opposed certain ceremonies of the Established Church, as the inclosure of the altar and kneeling at communion, the fear of persecution led him to a public recantation, though it afterwards appeared that his views had not changed. His opinions were clear, but he lacked strength of character to hold them consistently.

In losing Mr. Chauncy the church in Scituate gained another, whose sentiments as a Baptist were more firmly founded and more steadfastly main-

tained. Mr. Chauncy succeeded Henry Dunstar, the first president of Harvard College. While in the exercise of his presidency the latter had been brought to see the error of infant baptism. He withheld his own child from the rite and publicly spoke against it. Jonathan Mitchell, pastor of the Cambridge church, was led by Mr. Dunstar's arguments to question its authority, and only obtained quiet by persuading himself that his questionings were from the devil and resolving, as Thomas Hooker had resolved before him, that he would never recede from infant baptism till he should have an argument against it "able to remove a mountain." Cotton Mather says that Dunstar had "fallen into the briars of antipaedobaptism." At any rate, he was wofully scratched and wounded. He was indicted by the grand jury for disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism in the Cambridge church, where he had expressed his opinion against it, and was laid under bonds for good behavior, and was compelled to leave the College of which he was the ornament, the greatest benefactor and almost the founder. He retired to Scituate where he resided five years until his death, exercising his ministry in the church though, it seems, not made pastor. We are unable to trace further this early agitation of Baptist principles in Scituate.

The earliest person of whom we have any account, within the limits of the Old Colony Association, who fully adopted Baptist principles and joined a Baptist church, belonged to that part of the Old Colony Association which she has relinquished to the Barnstable ; and the earliest Baptist church in this region was composed of the red men of the forest. The man to whom we refer was Peter Folger, the grandfather of Benjamin Franklin. About 1675, Mr. Folger joined the Baptist church in Newport, then under the charge of that most estimable man and sturdy Baptist, almost a martyr to Baptist principles,—he having been sentenced to the whipping post at Lynn where Obadiah Holmes suffered for the truth, and escaping only "because he was a scholar bred," and some one secretly paid his fine,—physician, Baptist, preacher, public benefactor, statesman and patriot, John Clarke. For about twenty years before this, Mr. Folger had lived on Martha's Vineyard as a school-teacher among the Indians, an assistant to the devoted missionary Thomas Mayhew. Prince speaks of him as an "able, godly Englishman who was employed in teaching the youth in reading, writing and the principles of religion by catechism, being well learned likewise in the Scripture and capable of helping them in religious matters." After he became a Baptist he spread Baptist principles among the Indians. The converts joined the Newport church. As early as 1681, there was a native Baptist preacher among them, and as early as 1693, a Baptist church had been formed, and soon after this another. One of these churches remained at the commencement of the present century. Folger afterwards removed to Nantucket and was the means of forming an Indian Baptist church there.

The next Baptist whom we have to consider,—the first in what are now

the limits of the Association, was Thomas Nelson, the first Baptist of many in a family that was intimately connected with our history in the Old Colony for many years. He was born in Middleborough, June 5th, 1675. A few days later the new settlement in Middleborough was almost entirely deserted in consequence of the outbreak of King Philip's war, and the child, eighteen days old, was carried in his mother's arms to Plymouth, the day before the massacre of nine men by the Indians in Swanzey and the commencement of active hostilities in other neighboring towns. He afterwards settled in the part of this town that is now Lakeville. He was baptized, as nearly as can be ascertained, in 1717, and joined the Baptist church in Swanzey. His wife was baptized and joined the same church in 1723.

The next Baptist whom we have to consider, belonged to what is now in the territory of the Barnstable Association. He was Samuel Jennings, of Sandwich. Becoming a sailor, at the age of eighteen he was pressed on board a British man-of-war, where he was subjected to such abuse that, while in the harbor of Barbadoes he threw himself overboard by night and attempted to escape by swimming. His left arm was seized by a shark, and as he attempted to force it away by setting his right foot against the shark's mouth, the foot also was seized. Like Jonah in the belly of the whale, the poor man cried unto the Lord. When almost drowned, he found himself released; his shouts for assistance were heard on a vessel near by, and he was rescued. His arm and a part of his foot were amputated; but his members perished that his whole body might not be cast into hell, for the peril which had befallen him was sanctified to his conversion. He returned to Sandwich and became a leading citizen there. He wrote, "Though I had heard much preaching and read many books to support baptizing infants and had never read any books or discoursed on that head with any that were against it, yet I found so much in the Scripture to the contrary that I could not believe it to be right. Notwithstanding, I went to several ministers and discoursed with them on that point to get light, and also prayed to God to direct me in the right way; yet still it appeared to me unscriptural and erroneous. Then I went to Mr. Callender, the Baptist minister at Boston, who not only discoursed with me, but lent me books set out by those of his persuasion to support the truth thereof; which, when I had read, I found so agreeable to the Scriptures and with the apprehensions I before had from them, that I quickly sought to be admitted into the communion of that church at Boston. And, having made a verbal profession before the church and congregation, I was baptized, that is, dipped in the water, by Mr. Elisha Callender, minister of the gospel, on the 9th day of June, 1718, in the thirty-fourth year of my age. And truly I may say, as is said of the Ethiopian eunuch, that I came away rejoicing." Mr. Jennings probably became acquainted with Baptists in Boston while representative of the town of Sandwich at the General Court. He remained a member of the Boston church till his death in 1764.

We find our next Baptist by returning to the town of Middleborough. July 17th, 1732, John Comer, pastor of the Baptist church in Newport,

R. I., as we learn from his manuscript diary, preached in this town and baptized Benjamin Booth. Nothing farther seems to be known of this early Baptist.

We are directed next to the northern part of the territory now occupied by the Association. The First Baptist Church in Boston was established in 1664. At the time of which we are speaking, its pastor was Elisha Callender, of whom the little band of Massachusetts Baptists were somewhat proud, because he was the first minister among them who was educated, in the technical sense of the word. He was a graduate of Harvard College, and his ordination sermon was preached by Cotton Mather. His influence was widely felt; and the interests of the denomination, by his means, were largely advanced, not in Boston only but throughout the State. October 20th, 1734, he baptized six persons in Marshfield. They were Nathan Sprague, Timothy Rogers, Jeremiah Crocker, John White, Jr., Elizabeth Low and Mary White. They joined Elder Callender's church. They were evidently the centre from which a Baptist influence was spreading; for, two years later, four others,—Samuel, Elizabeth and Joanna Wilkinson and Margaret Howland, requested Mr. Callender to visit Marshfield again and baptize them. He did not come to Marshfield but they were baptized by him in Boston, in August, 1736. Ephraim Bound, pastor of the Second Baptist Church in Boston, baptized Thomas Macomber in Marshfield in 1744, and Onesimus Macomber in 1748. At about the latter date, the plan seems to have been laid of establishing a permanent Baptist society in this town, and work was commenced on a house of worship, but the project was soon abandoned. Marshfield seems to have come somewhat near taking the honor of furnishing the oldest church in the Association.

For more than a century after the settlement of Plymouth the only Baptist churches in Massachusetts were the church in Swanzey, founded in 1663, the church in Boston, founded in 1664, and the Indian churches in Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, founded before 1700. Whether from the lack of elements of progress in themselves or from the force of the tide of opposition which they had to breast, they remained almost stationary. From 1736 to 1743, five Baptist churches were formed in Massachusetts. They sprung, though by very indirect descent, from the churches in Swanzey and Boston. They were small and unpromising, still, they were perhaps, the first fruits of a harvest that was soon to be reaped.

Thus far we have found our history in the Old Colony, as, indeed, it was throughout New England except in Rhode Island, in isolated fragments. The sands have disclosed now and then a nugget to reward the antiquarian zeal that has patiently dug them over. Soon, however, we shall strike a clear vein of metal which will grow in abundance the farther we follow it. Until more than a third of the last century had passed we can scarcely claim that there was in Massachusetts a *stream* of Baptist history : there was rather a few pools or lakelets, and when the stream started it was scarcely con-

nected with them, but rather flowed from other springs and took them in its course.

The Congregational churches of New England, like State churches always, had, as their best and wisest men confessed, wofully deteriorated till they were almost spiritually dead. Their Half-way Covenant had not only given to unconverted men a controlling voice in church government, but, as they themselves acknowledged, with an attempt to justify it, had filled the churches and even the ministry with the unregenerate. The lapse of a large proportion of the Congregational churches of Massachusetts into Unitarianism, at the beginning of the present century, carrying with them Harvard College, was only the legitimate result of the loss of spiritual life in the churches more than fifty years before ;—a result that must have come much earlier and have been much more widely spread had not the providence of God brought into action a different element from any that the churches of the Standing Order contained, and by this held them in check. But a little after the middle of the last century, Unitarian books were among those most frequently published in Massachusetts and most widely read, and, but a very few years later, Unitarianism or Universalism was the prevailing belief in the Congregational churches in Boston.

The movement by which was secured the salvation of New England from formalism, unbelief, spiritual deadness, and conseqnent moral corruption, has received the name of the Great Awakening. It began in 1733, with the revival in Northampton, with its hundreds of converts, under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards ;—a revival the effects of which were powerfully felt by many churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut. But the work of Edwards was little more than preparatory. With masterly argument he could expose and confute the errors into which the ministry around him had fallen and had led the churches, with his godly example and faithful preaching of the truth, blessed by the Holy Ghost, he could lead to Christ the members of his own congregation, and achieve a reformation the fame of which should reach every other congregation in New England and, in part, make them ready for a similar work, but to stir the wide community, to break the spell of indifference, to sound the trumpet of alarm, to strike off the shackles of formalism, was not his mission. For this work, God had another agent.

" Prepared and ready the altar stands
Waiting the prophet's outstretched hands
And prayer awaiting to downward call
The fiery answer in view of all.
Hearts are like wax in the furnace ; who
Shall mould and shape and cast them anew ?
Lo ! by the Merrimack WHITEFIELD stands,
In the temple that never was made with hands ;
Curtains of azure and crystal wall
And dome of the sunshine over all ;
A homeless pilgrim with dubious name
Blown about on the winds of fame ;

Now as angel of blessing classed
And now as a mad enthusiast,
Up and down the world he went
A John the Baptist crying Repent!"

In the fall of 1740, Whitefield visited New England and preached a hundred and seventy-five sermons, most of them in Massachusetts, often to congregations of thousands. A revival attended him wherever he went, and many thousands were converted or reclaimed from coldness and backsliding. In 1745, he came to New England again and performed a similar work. Others of kindred spirit entered into his labors, and similar results attended them. Gilbert and William Tennant, and Bellamy and Wheelock and Pomeroy and Davenport, preaching such truths and in such a manner as made the staid orthodoxy stand aghast, filled New England with their views, and thousands learned from them the gospel of salvation.

These converts of the Great Awakening must needs be gathered into churches. They would not, and could not, unite with the churches of the Standing Order, against whose worldliness and deadness the whole movement had been a protest and by whom it had been met with bitter opposition and hostility. They were compelled to form churches of their own. They called them Separate, or New Light, churches. The number of these churches was large,—how large can probably never be definitely stated, for many of them were formed hastily and irregularly, and after a brief history changed their form and name or were disbanded. Backus's History mentions the ordination of thirty-one Separate ministers from September 1746 to May 1751.

But the Separatist movement was merely transitorial. Its churches had irregularities of form and diversities of doctrine. Moreover, they had principles which the movement did not carry to their logical end. They were under the necessity of going further. Their distinctive doctrine, on which they had separated from the Standing Order, was the doctrine that religion is spiritual, consisting not in church organization, nor correctness of creed, nor stated forms of worship, but in the renewal and sanctification of the heart. With this doctrine it is plain, at a glance, that the baptism of unregenerate and almost unconscious infants,—the theory that in some way the faith of their parents will avail for them, that a mere outward rite, without even the possibility of inward grace, connects them with Christ's church and seals to them the blessings of God's covenant,—can have no harmony. The Separatists could not fail to discern this, as evangelical Paedobaptists cannot to-day. There is, however, this difference, that evangelical Paedobaptists of to-day are, and have been for years, incorporated with their respective denominations, and, their associations being a check upon the free action of their principles, they only express the incongruity of infant baptism with evangelical piety by withholding from baptism seven out of eight of their children; the Separatists, on the contrary, having no denominational organization, no crippling associations with other churches and no

prestige from the past to restrain them, could permit their fundamental principle of the spirituality of religion to have free course, and if it demanded the renunciation of infant baptism could let infant baptism fall before it. Thus many of the Separatists from the first were opposed to infant baptism. The more the question was discussed, the more clearly the opposition was seen to be well founded, and the stronger it grew, and the wider it spread. By the inevitable working of their principles the Separatists were forced upon Baptist ground. One by one their churches took the Baptist form and name. From 1750 to 1780, forty-eight Baptist churches were formed in Massachusetts, almost entirely as the result of the New Light movement.

The Old Colony felt these influences in common with the rest of New England. Whitefield preached two sermons in the North Precinct of Bridgewater, and John Porter, the Orthodox pastor there, renounced his former hope and professed conversion. Gilbert Tennant and Eleazer Wheelock preached in Middleborough, Raynham, Bridgewater, Halifax and Plymouth; and other evangelists caused the "new light" to shine in almost every neighborhood. Separate churches were formed, which, here as elsewhere, soon began to assume the Baptist garb.

The first manifestation in the Old Colony of this new Baptist movement was in the neighborhood where we are now assembled, and in connection with the life and work of one whose name will be known and honored as long as American Baptists or American liberties shall remain or American history shall be studied. Isaac Backus was converted in his native town of Norwich, Ct., in a New Light revival. He first joined a church of the Standing Order, but afterwards left it to help form a New Light church. He began preaching in 1746, came to Titicut in 1748, preached for a little time to an Orthodox society and afterwards assisted in forming a New Light church and became its pastor. The questions of the mode and subjects of baptism began to be agitated among them almost at once. Nine of the church, convinced before the pastor, called in a Baptist minister and were baptized. Backus wrote in his diary, with some appearance of asperity, that Ebenezer Moulton "had been among his people preaching, and had *plunged* some of them," and again, that he had "*dipped*" another. Those who had been immersed formed a Baptist church in February, 1750, but it soon dissolved and its members united, part with the Baptist church in Swanzey and part with the Second Baptist church in Boston. The next year Backus himself, having renounced infant baptism and become satisfied that immersion alone is baptism, was baptized. Five years longer he continued in the Separate church, and then joined with five others in forming what has been known for a hundred and sixteen years as the First Baptist Church in Middleborough,—the oldest in the sisterhood of churches in the Old Colony Baptist Association.

The New Light preachers whom we have mentioned were evangelists and had little to do with the formation of churches. Whatever of form and

organization the New Light movement had, was given to it largely by three brothers of Canterbury, Ct.,—Elisha, Solomon and John Paine. They were natives of Eastham on Cape Cod. Elisha Paine, the chief of the three, the first man who was ordained pastor of a New Light church, after preaching and suffering persecution in northern Connecticut and the neighboring parts of Massachusetts, visited his relatives in his native district, and as he went, preached. Great interest was aroused, especially in the towns of Chatham and Harwich, and, as the result, as early as 1749, a Separate church was formed in the latter town. Some of its members soon adopted Baptist principles. In 1753, two years after his own baptism, Isaac Backus baptized its pastor, Richard Chase, and soon the church became definitely Baptist.

We have stated that about 1717, Thomas Nelson, who resided in that part of Middleborough which has since become Lakeville, was baptized and united with the Baptist church in Swanzey, June 22d, 1742, Benjamin Herrington of Swanzey, baptized in what is now Lakeville, Jabez Wood, grandson of Thomas Nelson, who nine years later became Herrington's successor as pastor in Swanzey, his son, Jabez Wood, junior, and two others, Thomas Nelson and his grandson, Jabez Wood did not agree as well in other matters as in religious sentiments, and when the latter became pastor in Swanzey, the former removed his relation to the church in Rehoboth. This may have been a reason why, in 1753, he set up a stated Baptist meeting in his own house in Middleborough. Ebenezer Hinds of Bridgewater, who had been a member of Mr. Backus's Separate church and was afterwards baptized by Ebenezer Moulton and became a member of the Baptist church first formed in Titicut, and upon its dissolution joined the Second Baptist church in Boston, became their preacher. Soon after, a Separate church in Beech Woods, four miles away, was dissolved, most of its members having become Baptists. They joined with the interest under the charge of Mr. Hinds, and, November 16th, 1757, formed the Second Baptist Church in Middleborough, later known as the First Baptist Church in Lakeville. Ebenezer Hinds was ordained its pastor the following January. Thomas Nelson, the earliest Baptist within the present associational limits, died the year before this church was formed, but his widow, Hope Nelson, the next Baptist in order of time, met with the church at communion when she was more than a century old, and died in 1782, aged a hundred and five years and seven months, having over two hundred and fifty living descendants.

Perhaps the spreading of the gospel in destitute neighborhoods around them and the planting of new churches, scarcely has a share in the energies or a place in the plans of the pastors here assembled; but Baptists a hundred years ago recognized that their field was the world, and they sowed and reaped as widely as they could. Thus we find Isaac Backus preaching at home and in all the neighborhoods and towns around him and often on preaching tours in distant places,—now in Boston preaching to

the Second Baptist Church and comforting them at the death of their pastor, now preaching in private houses on Cape Cod, or watching on the shores for a craft that will take him across the Sound that he may preach on Martha's Vineyard, now founding a Baptist church among the hills of New Hampshire, and now proclaiming the truth in Virginia. Shortly after his own church was formed, he preached repeatedly in the southeastern part of the town, and several were converted and baptized. August 9th, 1761, five members of his church residing in this district and one in Carver, with four members of the Second Church, were organized as the Third Baptist Church in Middleborough, or the Rock Church. In the following October, Ebenezer Jones was ordained their pastor, but, a difficulty arising, he soon left them, and for ten years the church was in an unpromising condition. In 1771, Asa Hunt, a member of the First Middleborough Church was ordained their pastor. Mr. Backus preached the Ordination Sermon, entitled "Evangelical Ministers described, and distinguished from Legalists." It was published, and is one of the clearest and best of Backus's minor publications. From 1780 to 1782, the labors of Mr. Hunt were blessed with perhaps the most extensive revival of religion known in the history of the Old Colony. About two hundred were hopefully converted. Among those who joined the church at this time was the noted Deborah Sampson, from whom the hand of fellowship was afterwards withdrawn because of her dressing in men's clothes and serving as a soldier in the army of the Revolution. Mr. Hunt followed well the training which, for a time, he had had under Isaac Backus. He preached in all the region around him; and when involved in business and legal difficulties with some members of his church, he was constrained to leave them, we find him preaching in central Massachusetts and in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia. In 1792, this church removed from its original location, sometimes called The Old Spruce Meeting-house, to where it now is. In 1794, Samuel Nelson, one of three brothers who were Baptist ministers, great grandsons of the primitive Old Colony Baptist, Thomas Nelson, was ordained here. He had a long and successful pastorate. Among the many whom he baptized may be mentioned his great aunt, Lois Thomas, daughter of the original Thomas Nelson, who was buried "in the likeness of Christ's death" in 1797, at the age of ninety-three years.

A New Light meeting was established in Barnstable in 1748, in connection, it is supposed, with the labors of Elisha Paine. Two years later, Isaac Backus spent some days in preaching there, and, soon after, a New Light church was formed. It had the usual experience of the speedy agitation of Baptist principles, till, June 20th, 1771, a Baptist church was formed from it.

In June, 1735, Samuel Maxwell, pastor of the Baptist Church in Swanzey, baptized into the fellowship of that church Mary, wife of Thomas Records of Bridgewater. We may say in a double sense that this is the commencement of Baptist *records* in Bridgewater. Some time later, William

Records was baptized by Ebenezer Moulton of Brimfield. In March, 1753, Joseph Harvey was baptized and united with the Swanzey Church. The first labors of Isaac Backus in this State, and the commencement of the interest which resulted in the formation of the First Baptist Church in Middleborough, were in Bridgewater, in 1748. Shortly after this, Mr. Backus went to West Bridgewater, and kept a day of fasting with Christians there, and the next day assisted in forming them into a New Light church. It had but a brief and stormy history. Many residents of this part of Bridgewater were, from time to time, baptized by Mr. Backus and joined his church in Middleborough. In 1783, a meeting-house for Baptist services was erected here; and in 1785, sixteen persons, having been dismissed from Mr. Backus's church, were incorporated as a Baptist church in Bridgewater. This church continued to exist till 1833.

In 1780, Isaac Backus baptized in Middleborough a resident of Pembroke; and he baptized in Pembroke one person in 1786, one in 1787 and one in 1791. It is supposed that these persons resided in that part of Pembroke which is now Hanson. Among Mr. Backus's manuscripts is a copy of a letter which he wrote to Abia Hinds, from which it appears that a Baptist Society was formed, and for a while existed in Pembroke at an early date. He writes, "As you have been instrumental of gathering a society in Pembroke and then of making a division therein, and you and your friends have been earnest for my help in your establishment, I shall now take the liberty of turning you to God's law of love, who says, 'If ye bite and devour one another take heed lest ye be consumed one of another;' Gal. 5 : 14, 15; and if you should do it, remember that it was not without warning from your hearty friend, ISAAC BACKUS."

We have seen that several persons residing in Marshfield, were baptized by Elders Callender and Bound of Boston, from 1734 to 1748. In 1773, Mr. Backus labored a week in Marshfield, and he wrote in his diary as follows:—"Deacon Josiah Eames and his wife, Thomas Eames and his wife, David Thomas junior and his wife, Thomas Joyce and his wife, and some others, seem not only to be convinced that the parish worship is very corrupt, but also that the Baptist principles are right; were very thankful for my coming, and there is a hopeful prospect of an agreeable society being formed here." The next year, Mr. Hunt of the Third Middleborough Church, preached in Marshfield and baptized seven persons, and in 1781 he preached and baptized six, and in 1786 he came again and his work was blessed with a revival which resulted, two years later, in the building of a Baptist meeting-house and the formation of the First Baptist Church in Marshfield. Eleven of its constituent members were from Mr. Hunt's church in Middleborough.

New Light preachers visited Carver and preached with so much success that a New Light meeting-house was sustained there, at least at intervals, for many years. Abraham Cummings was invited to settle there, but while he was considering the question he became a Baptist and Isaac Backus

baptized him. After this he seems to have preached in Carver for a time. A Baptist church was formed there in July, 1791, of nine male and three female members, most of whom were from the Third Church in Middleborough. John Tripp, a licentiate of the latter church, was ordained pastor of the new interest.

We have thus glanced at some of the features of our history in the Old Colony from the time of its settlement and at the beginnings of such Baptist churches as were constituted before the present century. I should lack the information needed in order to notice thus the history of individual churches more recently formed; and to recite such history would weary your patience. Other churches which preceded the formation of the Association and were afterwards connected with it were constituted as follows:—Fourth Middleborough in 1800, Kingston in 1805, Hanover in 1806, Plymouth in 1809, South Hanson in 1812, Sharon in 1814, Foxborough in 1817, and Randolph in 1819.

The Warren Association was constituted in 1767. The leading spirit in its formation was James Manning, the first president of Brown University, who was led to desire and promote it from having seen the working and experienced the benefits of the Philadelphia Association. Besides promoting the edification which naturally results from Christian intercourse and coöperation in religious work it soon enabled the churches to afford mutual aid in resisting civil oppression and persecution in the interests of the Standing Order. Of the four constituent churches of the Warren Association the Second Middleborough was one. Isaac Backus was the first Clerk, though his church did not join the body till 1770. Says Backus, "They waited until they could be satisfied that this Association did not assume any jurisdiction over the churches, before they joined; and they now joined upon the express condition that no complaint should ever be received by the Association against any particular church that was not of our Association nor from any censured member of any of our churches." Many other churches were hindered at first by similar considerations from committing themselves to the new movement. But as the benefits of the organization came to be seen, most of the Baptist churches in the State, some of them nearly two hundred miles apart, united with it. With the slow and inconvenient modes of travel of that day, attendance on the annual meetings was difficult, and, year by year, a large proportion of the churches were marked on the Minutes as unrepresented. Naturally the churches began to secede from the Warren Association and to form Associations by themselves. Thus the Sturbridge Association was constituted in 1802, the Westfield in 1811, the Boston in 1812 and the Worcester in 1819.

In 1822, fifty years ago, representatives of Baptist churches in this portion of the State formed the Old Colony Association. The records of the meeting at which the organization was effected were probably never published. No constitution was adopted. The first meeting seems to have

been simply a convention which passed the vote of organization and made arrangements for the meeting of the subsequent year.

October 7th, 1823, the first formal meeting of the Association was held with the church in Plymouth. Ten churches composed the body. Their names, with those of their pastors and delegates, are as follows :—

First Middleborough, Ichabod Washburn, Joshua Waterman.

Barnstable, John Peak, pastor; Nymphas Handy, Simeon Coombs, licentiates; Lot Scudder, Nathan Chapman.

Harwich, David Curtis, pastor; Elisha Crocker.

Carver, Ebenezer Shurtleff, Abijah Lucas.

Marshfield, Thomas Conant, pastor; Deacon William Eames, John Partridge, Nathaniel Damon.

Fourth Middleborough, Ebenezer Briggs, pastor; Elisha Tucker.

Kingston, Samuel Glover, pastor; Deacon Jabez Weston, John Alden, Daniel Weston.

Hanover, John Butler, pastor; Deacon John Collamore, Abial Cudworth.

Plymouth, Benjamin C. Grafton, pastor; Deacon John Hall, David Dimond, Sylvanus Paty, Benjamin Thomas.

Pembroke and Hanson, Joseph Torrey, pastor; Comfort Bates, Bowen Barker.

Samuel Glover of Kingston was the Moderator of the meeting, and Benjamin C. Grafton of Plymouth the Clerk. John Peak of Barnstable had been appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon, but as he was not present, David Curtis preached from 2 Tim. 1 : 9. "*Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*" A collection of $12.60, was taken for the relief of widows and children of deceased ministers. Five other sermons were preached during the session, one by John Butler of Hanover, one by Thomas Conant of Marshfield, one by Mr. Putnam and two by Mr. Bird, messengers from the Warren Association. The Circular Letter was by John Butler, on "The Relation of Christians to each other as *Brethren.*" Joseph Torrey, Benjamin C. Grafton and John Butler having been appointed a committee for the purpose, presented a form of Constitution, which was adopted. It laid down no article of faith, except that the Association should "be composed of such churches as should be disposed to unite upon the principles generally maintained by Particular or Calvinistic Baptists." It was retained, unchanged, for thirty-five years, and then was altered to its present form. On the afternoon of the second day the Lord's Supper was administered to the Association; an act which, with all respect to our Baptist fathers, we think they would have found difficult to harmonize with Baptist principles. A collection was taken for the Burman mission. The Association was held two full days with their evenings. The Minutes close with the words,— "As this was the first session, and the Association consisted of but ten churches, our brethren came together with a modest timidity. But we have

the pleasure to announce that our meetings have been full and our business conducted with harmony and love. The Lord evidently favored us with his special presence, and we believe there was joy in heaven over repenting sinners among us."

The ten churches had an aggregate of 1203 members. The church in Barnstable, with 247, was the largest; Harwich, with 246, was next in rank; Kingston, with 137, was the third, and Marshfield, with 119, was the fourth. The smallest church was the 4th Middleborough, afterwards the 2d Lakeville, and that had 67 members. Sixty-five in all the churches, had been baptized during the previous year.

Let us glance at a few of the men who helped constitute this body.

Samuel Glover, the Moderator, was pastor in the Association successively of the Kingston, Carver, Marshfield and Halifax churches. He was in the latter church as late as 1846. John Peak of Barnstable had already done noble werk there and in other churches. Many of you, doubtless, have read his Memoir. David Curtis, the first preacher, died three years ago, in Stoughton, aged eighty-seven. Ebenezer Briggs of the 4th Middleborough church was a member of that church at its formation in 1800, was ordained its pastor in 1810, and remained in that relation till he died. He doubtless baptized more who have been members of this Association than any other person. Its Minutes for almost thirty years bear fullest testimony to his faithfulness and efficiency. At the meeting in 1851, "attention was called to the death of Father Briggs," and it was stated that he left a written sketch of his Christian experience, and, by vote of the Association which had known him so long and well, the sketch was published in the Minutes of that year. Thomas Conant represented the church in Marshfield. He was then thirty-seven years of age, and had been ten years in the ministry, having been ordained in 1812 the first pastor of the Pembroke, now the Hanson, church; yet he had almost fifty years of life then before him, nearly all of which was to be spent in this Association. At the meeting five years ago he was present and offered prayer. He died in 1870, aged eighty-five years. The Association at its last meeting paid affectionate tribute to his memory. We recognize in these first Minutes the names of two persons who are members of it still and are present at this fiftieth anniversary; they are William Eames, delegate from the Marshfield church and Elisha Tucker, delegate from the 4th Middleborough.

The second meeting of the Association was held in Barnstable. The ten churches had baptized 62. At the close of the meeting, the Association was resolved into a council, and Otis Wing of Harwich and Simeon Coombs of Barnstable were ordained to the work of the ministry. The next session was with the 4th Middleborough church. The recently formed churches in Chatham, Brewster and Scituate were added. In the Minutes of this year we find the name of Levi Peirce, afterwards founder of Peirce Academy, and one of the best known and most honored laymen of this body. He was a delegate of the 4th Middleborough church. The next session was in

Kingston. We notice in its Minutes the names of two persons, afterwards well known as members of this body, and who are still waiting on this side of the river. They are John Allen, who the next year was connected with the Association as pastor in Kingston and for many years was its Clerk, and he who is now the most aged and venerable minister of this body, yet able to be present with us to-day,—Silas Hall. The latter preached at this meeting, from Is. 58 : 5. "*He was wounded for our transgressions*," *&c.* The new church at Orleans was this year added to the Association. In 1828 the churches in Edgarton and Abington were added. The latter reported forty members and had as pastor David Curtis and as delegate Caleb Benson. The next year the latter was reported as a licentiate. He was the blind preacher whom so many of us have led by the hand. He was a member of the Association almost all his life and died in its fellowship in 1869, aged 63. In 1829 the Central Middleborough Church, then the fifth church of the denomination in the old town, was added to the body. It reported 28 baptisms and a membership of 42. Nicholas Medbery was its pastor and Levi Peirce its first delegate. The church in Harwich reported a large revival in which 25 had been baptized; and the church in Marshfield had baptized 10 and had become the largest church of those that now remain in the Association, having 128 members. The Clerk closed the Minutes of the year with the words, "The prospects of this infant Association were perhaps never more encouraging." In 1830, 69 had been baptized in Barnstable, 17 of whom were Marshpee Indians, and had been incorporated into a branch church. In 1831 the Association met in Barnstable. Its reports were more encouraging than at any previous year. The 2d Middleborough Church was received from the Warren Association, and the Holmes Hole, 2d Falmouth and Nantucket churches were added. Two hundred and fifty-seven had been baptized, some in almost every church. Ebenezer Briggs had baptized 35 in the 4th Middleborough Church, Thomas Conant 41 in Plymouth, Nicholas Medbery 55 in the Central Middleborough, and Seth Ewer, whose death was reported in the meeting two years ago, 12 in Edgarton; 31 had been baptized in Barnstable, 29 in Brewster, and 13 in the 2d Middleborough Church. The net increase was 455, bringing the total membership up to 1665. At this meeting the Association was divided, nine churches with 791 members being dismissed to form the Barnstable Association. At the close of the session a meeting was held to organize the new Association, and its first Minutes were published with those of the parent body. The next year, 1832, was another year of prosperity. The 3d Middleborough, Stoughton and Foxborough churches were received from the Warren Association. A hundred and nine had been baptized. Allowing for the dismission of the churches of the Barnstable Association, there had been a gain of 372. We notice in the Minutes of this year the familiar name of Hervey Fittz, then pastor of the Central Middleborough Church.

The Association in these first ten years of its existence had baptized in

all 799. Notwithstanding the loss of nine churches with 791 members, it had gained 38, its membership at the close of the decade being 1236.

In 1833 the North Marshfield Church was added, with 49 members and Silas Ripley as its pastor; and the West Bridgewater Church with 22 members. The 4th Middleborough Church reported a branch at Raynham "with 35 members, a meeting-house, a Sabbath school, regular preaching and a respectable congregation." The next year Ebenezer Briggs had baptized 45 in connection with this interest. In 1835 the Sharon Church was received from the Warren Association, with Silas Hall as its pastor. In 1837 we find in the Minutes the name of Ebenezer Nelson as pastor of the Central Middleborough Church, where he remained, honored and beloved, for fourteen years. For twelve years he was the Standing Secretary of the Association. He was a great great grandson of the primitive Old Colony Baptist, Thomas Nelson. Turning forward to the Minutes of 1852 we find the Association making solemn mention of his death and praying that the bereavement may be sanctified to their good. In 1839 the Central Middleborough Church reported a branch in Halifax where Caleb Benson was preaching, and in 1840 he had baptized 34 into its membership. This year the Raynham branch had become an independent church and was received to the Association. The year 1842 was the most encouraging in the whole history of the Association. Four hundred and five were baptized. Silas Hall had baptized 13 in the 1st Middleborough Church, Samuel Glover 10 in the 1st Marshfield, Ebenezer Briggs 3 in the 4th Middleborough and 14 in Raynham, Thomas Conant 5 in Hanover, Flavel Shurtleff 31 in Hanson, E. C. Messenger 33 in Abington, Ebenezer Nelson 50 in Central Middleborough, Alexander Milne 33 in 3d Middleborough, Isaac Smith 34 in Stoughton, Silas Ripley 11 in North Marshfield, Caleb Benson 15 in West Bridgewater, E. G. Sears 12 in Sharon, 55 were baptized in Kingston, 70 in Scituate, 6 in Foxborough, 6 in Plymouth, 2 in Halifax, and 1 in Second Middleborough. Every one of the twenty churches reported greater or less addition through the baptismal waters. After the reading of the letters "the Associatiou unanimously agreed to suspend business proceedings for the purpose of engaging in devotional exercises, and returning thanks to God for his mercy and goodness bestowed upon the churches during the previous year." Thomas Conant, the Moderator, offered a prayer of thanksgiviug. Perhaps this house where we are now assembled never saw an occasion more solemn or gladsome than the meeting of the Association here thirty years ago.

In the second decade of the Association there had been baptized in all, 1061. The Association gained 688, making its total number 1924.

In 1843, 117 were baptized, and the total membership was 1983, the highest point it has ever reached. In 1844, the number of baptisms was only 11. The branch in Halifax had become independent and was added to the Association, and the church in East Randolph was dropped. In 1845 only 7 baptisms were reported, in 1846 only 11, and in 1847 only 17. This year

the East Stoughton, Foxborough and Sharon churches were dismissed to help form the Boston South Association. In 1848, 33 were baptized and in 1849, only 11,—9 in Scituate, 2 in Abington and none in the other fifteen churches. In 1850, the depression of previous years was changed to gladness. Several of the churches had been graciously visited, and 170 baptized. The church in Abington had received 98. A church had been formed in North Bridgewater, and was added to the Association, reporting 22 baptisms and 52 members.

In the third decade of its history there were baptized in the Association 346. One church was dropped, three dismissed and one added, making a loss of three, and the total membership was reduced to 1524, a loss of 400.

In 1856 the church in Raynham was dismissed to join the Taunton Association. The next two years were years of prosperity, 103 being baptized in 1857 and 151 in 1858. In 1860 the 1st Lakeville Church,—the old 2d Middleborough,—having become almost or quite extinct, was dropped from the Minutes.

In the fourth decade of its history there were baptized in the Association 590. There was a loss of two churches and of 7 in membership, the total number at the close of the ten years being 1517.

In 1863 only 6 were baptized in the whole Association,—the smallest number ever reported; and the next year only 9. In 1868 the church in North Bridgewater, which had started eighteen years before with the largest promise but had been soon crushed by heavy misfortunes, and which for years had made no report to the Association, was dropped from the Minutes. In 1869 W. H. Kelton had baptized 16 in North Scituate and in 1870, 12. The next year the church in North Scituate reported in their letter that "Father Conant and their beloved pastor, W. H. Kelton, had joined the church triumphant." The one had gone in the weakness of age, and the other in middle life and in the midst of his usefulness; but both left a noble record of service in the cause of Christ. The Minutes of this year also make sad mention of the death of Cephas Pasco, for nearly twelve years pastor of the church in West Bridgewater.

In summing up the history of the Association, there are many points on which I would gladly dwell if time allowed. I might mention the benevolent work of the Association, in which, in proportion to its means, it has a good record,—its interest in Missions, in Sunday Schools, in Education, in Temperance, in the cause of human freedom,—but to these I can only allude.

I cannot close without a word of regret that so many churches of the Association, once active and flourishing, have now ceased to exist. The 1st Lakeville, or old 2d Middleborough Church, the second in order of age of all the churches in the present limits of the Association; the 2d Lakeville or old 4th Middleborough, where Ebenezer Briggs baptized his scores year by year; the North Bridgewater Church, once seemingly so full of youthful vigor, the Halifax Church,—why are their names not in the Minutes now?

Why are others which still have a name to live, yet evidently growing weaker year by year? Has the spirit of the fathers been inherited by the children? If Isaac Backus and Asa Hunt had been alive, would not these churches have received from their sister churches more of sympathy and encouragement and assistance?—would they have been permitted to die or to languish? Is there not room to question whether we are bound together by as close a tie as bound our fathers?—whether, with our extreme churches almost within an hour's ride of each other by rail-road, we are not practically farther from each other than when Isaac Backus must ride on horseback all day to preach in some private house in Pembroke or Marshfield at evening? With our commendable zeal in missions in foreign lands and in the South and West, have we not neglected that no less important mission work which our denominational fathers did so nobly, in their own immediate vicinity?

And yet the review which we have taken may well afford encouragement. Thomas Nelson, in 1717 the single Baptist in all this district, has a host of representatives to-day. There was a handful of corn, the fruit whereof shakes like Lebanon. The little one has become more than a thousand. The disciples have gone out in obedience to the Great Commission, and the Master has been with them according to his promise. Let the faith and zeal of the past be not slackened but rather increased, and the future shall yield a yet more abundant harvest.

STANDING RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That we commit the cause of our Home and Foreign Missions to the special attention of our Churches, and that we will use our best exertions to secure early and liberal contributions to its funds.

2. *Resolved*, That the churches connected with the Association be requested to take up a collection on the Sabbath previous to the meeting of the Association in behalf of the Massachusetts Charitable Society, for the benefit of the widows and children of deceased Baptist ministers, and forward the same to the Treasurer of this Association.

3. *Resolved*, That the Churches of this body are recommended to observe the first Monday in January next as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer to Almighty God, for his blessing upon his people and the world.

4. *Resolved*, That we recommend to our Churches the observance of the last Thursday of February next as a day of fasting and prayer for the Holy Spirit's influence upon our academies, colleges, theological seminaries, and other institutions of learning.

5. *Resolved*, That any brother whose name may be inserted in the Minutes of the Association, be our representative to other Baptist Associations.

MINUTES

OF THE

Old Colony Baptist Sabbath School Convention,

HELD WITH THE

Baptist Sabbath School, Central Middleborough, June 11, 1872.

1. The Convention was called to order by our revered President, Dea. P. E. Hill, at 10 o'clock, A. M. After singing by the Sabbath School Choir, and reading of Scripture, prayer was offered by Bro. H. Gannett, of Boston, and Rev. J. Hutchinson, of Middleborough.

2. On motion of Bro. G. G. Fairbanks, Rev. J. Barber was appointed Secretary *pro tem.*, Bro. Bailey being absent.

3. Remarks were made by Rev. G. G. Fairbanks, and also by our President, P. E. Hill.

4. The following Committees were appointed by the chair:—

On Arrangements—Rev. G. G. Fairbanks, Rev. T. L. Rogers, Rev. R. B. Moody, Rev. C. A. Snow.

On Finance—Rev. I. J. Burgess, Bro. T. W. Bailey, Bro. B. Dunbar.

On Nominations—Rev. C. A. Snow, Rev. A. Read, Rev. J. Hutchinson.

On Next Anniversary—Rev. T. L. Rogers, Rev. R. B. Moody, Rev. J. J. Burgess.

On Obituaries—Rev. H. C. Coombs, Rev. J. B. Reed, Rev. T. L. Rogers.

5. Remarks were made and prayer offered by Rev. H. Fitz, Missionary of the Massachusetts Baptist Convention.

6. Report of the Committee of Arrangements made and adopted.

7. The Secretary presented the following report:—

STATISTICS.

Schools.	Superintendents.	Teachers and Officers.	Classes.	Scholars.	Volumes in Library.	Baptisms.	Money raised for benevolent objects.	Money raised for home purposes.	Deaths.	Concerts.
South Abington,	Henry A. Bates,	18	15	200	400		$200.00	$100.00		Yes.
Cochesett,	Dea. P. E. Hill,	9	9	70	470		25.00	25.00	1	Yes.
North Carver,	Eben S. Lucas,	7	6	50	100	3		15.00		Yes.
South Hanson,	D. B. Daland,	12	9	70	300	6	12.00	15.35	1	Yes.
Hanover,	John S. Brooks,	9	9	70	450		12.38	70.00		Yes.
Kingston,	Pastor—T. R Crawley,	8	6	40	300					Yes.
First Marshfield,	[No Report.]									
North Marshfield,	G. S. Damon,	8	7	42	175			50.00		Yes.
North Middleboro',	Theodore H. Alden,	8	7	50	300		20.00			Yes.
Central Middleboro',	J. W. P. Jenks,	25	20	182	500		50.00	30.00	1	Yes.
Third Middleboro',	J. Q. Morton,	15	9	60	170		15.00	16.00		No.
Plymouth,	B. Hubbard,	24	19	151	344	2		110.00		Yes.
North Scituate,	Abel Sylvester,	24	17	142	307	6	36.75	56.05	1	Yes.
12 Schools.	12 Superintendents.	167	133	1127	3816	17	$370.13	$497.40	4	

8. The Treasurer's Report was presented and accepted, as follows :—

OLD COLONY BAP. S. S. CONVENTION *in acc't with* J. BARBER, *Tr. pro tem.*

DR.

Amount in the Treasury, June 13, 1871,	$2.44	
" of collection at North Scituate,	11.29	
		$13.73

CR.

Paid for printing Minutes,	$7.79	
" " stationery, &c.	55	
		$8.34
Balance in Treasury,		$5.39

Respectfully submitted, J. BARBER, *Treas. pro tem.*

9. Convention were entertained with a concert exercise, under the direction of Bro. J. W. P. Jenks, of Middleborough.

10. The Convention adjourned, after prayer, at 12 o'clock.

AFTERNOON.

11. The Convention re-assembled at 2 o'clock, and listened to reports from the various Committees, and transacted other important business.

12. An interesting blackboard exercise was given by Rev. R. B. Moody, of Plymouth, and was thoroughly discussed.

13. The Committee on Obituaries report as follows :—

The past has been a year of mercy. Only four deaths are reported in a total number of 1127. But among the few that have been taken away, there is one that requires special notice. Miss Georgie W. Horton, daughter of Rev. J. W. Horton, died in South Hanson, Oct. 24, 1871, in the 26th year of her age. In all the relations of life she beautifully illustrated the Christian profession. As a daughter, she was affectionate and dutiful; as a sister, amiable and attached; as a Christian worker in the church and in the Sunday school, unassuming and faithful. These traits of her character received their lustre from the grace of that Saviour in whom she fondly trusted. The influence of her life still remains as a sweet savor among her late associates.

T. L. ROGERS,
J. B. REED,
H. C. COOMBS,
Committee.

14. Singing by Sabbath school.

15. The question-box was introduced, and followed by an interesting discussion upon different subjects pertaining to the benefit of the Sabbath School Cause.

16. Prayer by Rev. A. Read.

17. Verbal reports from the following Superintendents :—

Henry A. Bates, of South Abington,
A. Sylvester, " North Scituate,
Dea. P. E. Hill, " Cochesett,
E. S. Lyons, " Carver,
Bro. Thomas, of Hanson,
J. S. Brooks, " Hanover.
Rev. R. B. Moody, of Plymouth.

18. Prayer by Dea. D. B. Gurney, of South Abington.

19. The following officers were chosen for the ensuing year :—

DEA. P. E. HILL, *President.*
J. S. BROOKS, *Vice President.*
H. A. BATES, *Secretary and Treasurer.*

20. A vote of thanks was extended by the Convention to the friends in Middleborough, for their kind hospitality; to the choir for their excellent music; and to Dea. Hill and the Old Colony Railroad Corporation, for the free return tickets.

21. Convention adjourned to meet with the Baptist Sabbath School in Plymouth, on the second Tuesday in June, 1873, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

P. E. HILL, *President.*

H. A. BATES, *Secretary and Treasurer.*